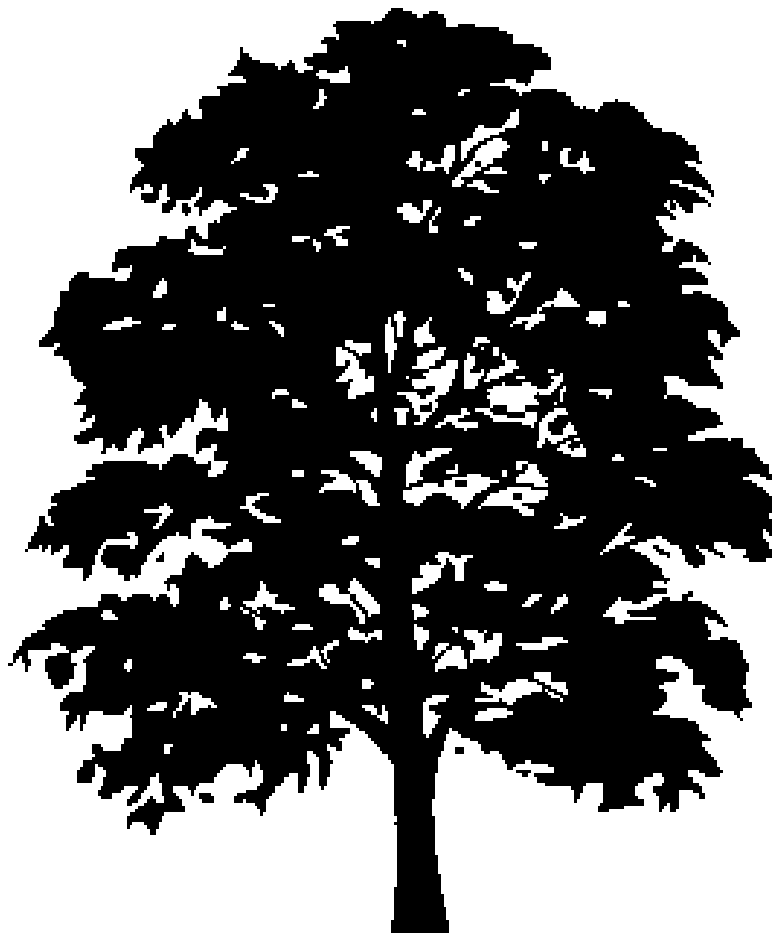


TOMPKINS COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2004 ANNUAL REPORT



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ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council (EMC) was created in 1971 by a resolution of the County Board of Representatives. The EMC acts as an advisory body to the County Legislature on matters affecting the preservation, development and use of the natural features of the County. The EMC identifies problems, proposes priorities, and coordinates activities in the development and management of our natural resources. It provides a public forum for the discussion of issues related to the natural environment in Tompkins County.

Staff and equipment are shared between the EMC and the Tompkins County Planning Department. In 2004, the EMC reported directly to the Tompkins County Legislature's Planning, Development & Environmental Quality Committee (PDEQ). County Representative Richard Booth served as the Legislature's liaison to the EMC.

Stephen Nicholson served a second term as Chair of the EMC. Joyce Gerbasi, Danny Pearlstein and Steve Uzmann served as Vice Chairs. Mr. Nicholson reported to the PDEQ Committee on the EMC's activities and goals throughout the year and served as the group's primary liaison to the Legislature.

Heather Filiberto served as the EMC Coordinator, providing organizational and technical assistance to the Council and coordinating EMC activities with other governmental advisory boards, County departments and the Legislature.

The *EMC News* was published for the eleventh year in 2004. The *News* is an important form of communication that is used to introduce resolutions, make announcements, provide committee reports and update members and other interested parties on the activities of the EMC each month.

EMC members are appointed by the County Legislature to serve two-year terms. All twelve at-large seats were filled in 2004. Nine municipal members (out of sixteen) also served as representatives from the Villages of Cayuga Heights, Freeville, and Lansing, and from the Towns of Caroline, Danby, Dryden, Ithaca, Lansing, and Newfield. Two empty municipal seats were converted to at-large seats for a one-year term in 2004. Members have a variety of backgrounds and levels of expertise. Municipal representatives provide an important link between countywide and local issues. Nine associate members were appointed to participate on EMC committees.

EMC members participate on the Council by attending monthly general meetings, working in task-oriented committees, and serving as liaisons to other organizations. Five committees were formed at the organizational meeting at the beginning of 2004: Education, Energy, Environmental Review, Public Safety Communications, and Water Monitoring. In September an ad hoc Burn Barrel Committee was established. Members also served as liaisons to four other organizations in 2004.

RESOLUTIONS

The EMC passed two resolutions in 2004. The first resolution was passed in April, recommending that the Tompkins County Legislature adopt a renewable energy standard for county electricity use. On September 7, 2004, the Legislature adopted a renewable energy standard for the County.

Tompkins County Renewable Energy Standard

"Tompkins County will increase its proportion of non-polluting, renewable energy so that 5% of its annual electricity use will be from renewable sources by 2008."

The second resolution passed in October, recommending that the Tompkins County Legislature prohibit open burning of household waste throughout the County. At the close of 2004, the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee of the Legislature had not taken action on this item.

The EMC plans to work with the Legislature and the Tompkins County Board of Health on this issue in 2005.

MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION

The EMC scheduled quarterly municipal reports in 2004 to give municipal representatives an opportunity to report on activities or concerns in their respective municipalities. The reports

facilitated communication on environmental issues and gave municipalities an opportunity to utilize the skills and resources of the EMC.

SPECIAL MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

Dereth Glance and Rob Foster, from the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, gave a presentation at the January meeting about establishing clean, renewable energy priorities. The Citizens Campaign is advocating that municipal governments establish a goal of purchasing 25% of their electricity needs from renewable sources by 2010. The EMC subsequently recommended a 5% goal by 2008, which the County adopted in August.

In February, Debbie Teeter, from Cornell Cooperative Extension, gave a presentation on the review process for the two State-designated agricultural districts in Tompkins County and the changes proposed for 2004.

At the March meeting, County Planning Department Staff Heather Filiberto and Crystal

Buck gave a presentation on the Draft Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan.

In April, Monika Roth, from Cornell Cooperative Extension, provided an overview and update on implementation of the Neighbor Notification Law in Tompkins County.

At the May meeting, Cornell Professor John Duxbury provided information about a Cornell project on land-based approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions regionally. The project aims to identify the location and productivity of land for corn, soybeans, and grass/willow (especially idle or fallow land) that could be used as a local fuel source. At the May meeting, EMC members also provided information and comment to Jarrett McLaughlin regarding an environmental planning project related to

protecting Unique Natural Areas in the Town of Dryden.

Phil Metzger and Madison Wright attended the EMC meeting in July to present information about the Central New York Resource Conservation & Development Program. RC&D funds a wide variety of agricultural demonstration projects.

At the September meeting, David Carr, Matt Starr, and Nate Krause, from the Institute for Applied Geospatial Technology, demonstrated the Finger Lakes Decision Support System. Funded by NASA, this interactive, data driven tool is currently being tested by a number of stakeholder organizations in the Finger Lakes to assess its ability to aid local water resource protection, agricultural protection, and other planning projects.

In October, the EMC Burn Barrel Committee gave a presentation on the negative impacts of burning trash in burn barrels and the status of current statewide legislation banning this practice. At the conclusion of the presentation, a resolution was presented from the Committee recommending that the Tompkins County Legislature prohibit open burning of household waste throughout the County. The resolution was passed by the EMC and forwarded to the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee for action by the County Legislature.

At the November meeting Madison Wright and Tania Schusler discussed the dangers of invasive species and Cooperative Extension's efforts to coordinate education preventing the spread of Japanese knotweed and other invasive species in the County.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

In March the EMC and County Planning Department hosted a wind energy webcast sponsored by the Local Government Environmental Assistance Network. Topics discussed included why local governments should consider wind energy program in their communities, what the benefits and challenges are for using wind energy, what role local governments can play, and how other local governments use wind energy.

The EMC remained active with the New York State Association of Environmental Management Councils (NYSAEMC). EMC members attended the annual NYSAEMC-sponsored Department of Environmental Conservation update in Albany in June and the annual meeting of the association in October. Steve Nicholson served as an at-large director of NYSAEMC in 2004, and EMC associate member Mikel Shakarjian was elected to serve as president.

Backyard Burning is A Serious Health Hazard If you're Smellin' it, you're Breathin' it!

In 2004 The EMC launched a campaign to prevent burning of household hazardous waste in Tompkins County.



COMMITTEE & LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Backyard Burning

The Backyard Burning Committee prepared a PowerPoint presentation about burn barrels that was presented to the EMC in November. A resolution was also drafted and presented at the same meeting supporting a countywide ban of backyard burning of household solid waste in the absence of statewide legislation. The resolution passed 8-3, and was forwarded to the County Legislature's Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee for County action.

Education

The Education Committee participated at Ithaca's EarthDay Festival in Dewitt Park with a table featuring a group of students and faculty from Ithaca College that ran an Ecological Footprint Café. The Café demonstrated to customers how their orders for energy, food, and material goods were unsustainable and could not be filled. Ice cream was served as a reward for participation.

The Committee worked with an intern to update the *Environmental Directory*. The directory was first published by the EMC in 1996 as a resource guide to local environmental organizations. Since that time, the internet has become a staple of modern communication, so it was time to update the document. The update will be completed in 2005.

Three clean-ups were held for the EMC's Adopt-A-Highway designated portion of New York State Route 13 between Warren Road and Route 366. The second annual Golden Hard Hat Award was presented to Steve Uzmann for perfect attendance, good attitude, and the entertaining stories he told during the clean-ups.

Energy

The Energy Committee remained active in 2004, advising the County Legislature on energy issues and advocating for alternative energy sources at the local and state levels. The primary committee accomplishment was Resolution 2004-1, supporting a five percent renewable energy standard for County operations, which the County Legislature adopted in August. The County has now committed to using renewable electricity sources for five percent of its electricity consumption by 2008. Two percent of the County's electricity is already generated through the library solar panels, so the County will then have to purchase three percent of its electricity from renewable sources, or approximately 250,000 kilowatt hours per year.

The committee followed up with a memo examining several alternatives for purchasing renewable electricity and recommended the most cost effective and viable option was to purchase wind power through the Municipal Electric and Gas Alliance (MEGA). The committee will follow-up with these recommendations in 2005.

The committee also sponsored an energy conference in conjunction with Earth Day in April. Representatives from Community Energy, Ithaca College, Sustainable Tompkins, the EMC, and Co-opPlus Energy Cooperative discussed the benefits and challenges of energy conservation, composting, and bringing alternative energy sources to Tompkins County. The conference provided a starting point for exploring ways of combining local resources in a community-wide effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In response to the library solar panel shading issue, the committee provided comments on the final proposal between the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County. The committee will continue to monitor the library solar panels, and the

County's efforts at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives' Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. The County continues to devote real dollars (\$50,000 in 2004) and staff time to reducing its climate change impacts. The committee will continue to advise and support the County in these efforts.

Finally, the committee is exploring a public relations campaign to get individuals to commit to the ten percent challenge, a program of Environmental Advocates of New York, where households pledge to reduce their energy use by ten percent.

Environmental Review

The Environmental Review Committee (ERC) met throughout the year to review and comment on projects that could potentially impact the environment in Tompkins County. The EMC is a formal part of the County's administrative policy to comply with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). All County agencies must refer Unlisted and Type I Actions to the EMC for review and comment.

The committee brings a wide variety of perspectives to bear on project reviews. Through this perspective, the committee tries to advocate for environmentally sound development. Committee actions included:

- Comments in support of the proposed public safety communication system tower replacement on the Ithaca College campus.
- Comments to the County Planning Department on the Long Environmental Assessment Form for the adoption of the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan.
- Comments to the Town of Danby on the potential negative impacts of a proposed 55-lot subdivision on Buttermilk Creek and Buttermilk Falls State Park.
- Comments to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in opposition to Cornell University's request to reduce the

number of water quality monitoring stations from 8 to 2 associated with the Lake Source Cooling Facility, in advance of their State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit renewal. Excerpts of this letter were also released to the local press.

Public Safety Communications

This committee did not meet in 2004. It was later decided that the Environmental Review Committee will be responsible for the environmental review of the County's Public Safety Communication System Capital Project, which is expected to move forward in 2005.

Water Monitoring

Members spent time in 2004 examining the purpose of this committee. Some ideas included reporting on:

- A list of methods by which the county could determine the quality of Cayuga Lake water at any time.
- A compilation of data gathered to date by various means and bodies.
- A list of flora and fauna that should be of particular concern.
- How to obtain a database against which to compare water quality in the future.
- A method by which appropriate water samples could be gathered and stored for future reference.
- What other municipalities/groups are doing.
- A combination of all or part of the above.

EMC Liaisons

EMC members served as liaisons to the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Community Waste Management Advisory Committee, Cornell Lake Source Cooling Data Sharing Group, and Tompkins County Water Resources Council. Liaisons attended and participated in meetings, and reported back to the EMC. The liaison positions for the Intermunicipal Organization for Cayuga Lake Management Plan remained vacant in 2004.

2004 EMC MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Appointed At-Large Members

Glynn Bebee	Dan Lamb
Kenneth Christianson	Ashley Miller
Karen Edelstein	Christian Nielsen-Palacios
Herb Engman	Daniel Pearlstein
Meira Hertzberg	Carolyn Shapiro
Neha Khanna	Steven Uzmann
William Kolberg	Roger Yonkin

Appointed Municipal Members and Representation

Stephen C. Nicholson	T. Caroline
Robert Roe	T. Danby
Barney Unsworth	T. Ithaca
Larry Sharpsteen	T. Lansing
Cindy Seliger Schulte	T. Newfield
Joyce Gerbasi	T. Dryden
David Woodard	V. Cayuga Heights
Mandy Kittelberger	V. Freeville
John Dennis	V. Lansing

Associate Members

Walter Buble	Dooley Kiefer
Barbara Ebert	Nancy Ostman
David Filiberto	Tania Schusler
Peter Harriott	Mikel Shakarjian

Legislature Liaison

Richard Booth

EMC Staff

Dariele Drake	Principal Account Clerk
Heather Filiberto	Coordinator
Kathy Wilsea	Secretary